

REMARKS

In the non-final office action dated October 16, 2008, all pending claims 1-22 were rejected. In response, Applicant is amending claims 1, 11, and 13-15. This includes all independent claims, which are claims 1, 11, and 15. As such, claims 1-22 as amended are pending. Favorable consideration of the amended pending claims is respectfully requested.

The independent claims are being amended to recite more specifically that upon receipt of an incoming electronic message in a computer system, fact attributes within the incoming electronic message are accessed and compared the with stored meta information to determine a first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information.

The amendments are supported by the present disclosure. For example, on page 6, lines 13-19, "...the server device 102 will access the identified fact attribute to initiate the retrieval of the fact(s) to which the fact attribute corresponds. The specific rule 200 and the fact attribute 202 that it identifies are examples of the meta information 124. The meta information 124 identifies a pre-selected class of stored fact information that is to be retrieved. Moreover, the first meta information 124A may correspond to a particular rule and to the fact attribute identified by it, the second meta information 124B may correspond to another rule and to the fact attribute identified by it, and so on."

Some dependent claims are amended to make the verb usage consistent between claims.

At page 19, line 15 of the specification, a paragraph is being amended to remove the "propagated signal" phrase that the Examiner noted.

No new matter is added.

Claim rejections 35 U.S.C. § 101

The Examiner rejected claims 11-14 and 15-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicant does not concede the correctness of the rejection. However, to advance prosecution, Applicant has amended claims 11 and 15 to recite "a computer program product tangibly embodied in a computer readable medium." Support for this amendment can be found in Applicants' specification at, for example, page 19, lines 6-9. Moreover, language in the

specification regarding a propagated signal is being removed. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 11-14 and 15-22.

Claim rejections 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-17, and 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Arora et al. US 20040064512 (Arora). The Examiner rejected remaining dependent claims 4, 10, and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Arora in view of Chandra et al. US 7130885 (Chandra). Claims 1, 11, and 15 are independent claims. These rejections are rendered moot in view of the above amendments. Nevertheless, and without conceding that the rejections have merit, Applicant will point to differences between the present subject matter and the references.

Applicant's claim 1 is directed to a method for responding to received electronic messages. In particular, upon receiving an electronic message, the method includes accessing fact attributes within the incoming electronic message and comparing the fact attributes with meta information stored in the computer system to determine a first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information. The meta information specifies which portion(s) of stored fact information, located in a second repository, should be retrieved for processing the electronic message. That is, the meta information may identify which executable instruction stored on a server should be used. In general, meta information identifies the first user-selected class that is stored in a repository and accessed upon receipt of the incoming electronic message such that a portion of the stored fact information (that is a member of the first user-selected class) can be retrieved upon accessing the meta information. Applicant submits that Arora does not anticipate a method that determines a response to a received electronic message by analyzing fact attributes stored within an electronic message. Further, Arora does not anticipate a method which uses both fact attributes stored within the electronic message and meta information for purposes of determining appropriate processing rules and applying those rules to the incoming electronic message.

Arora discloses embodiments of a distributed instant messaging system that uses a distributed index in peer-to-peer networks. (Abstract 1-2). The embodiments are generally directed to routing messages between participating peers, identifying and authenticating peers wishing to participate, forming peer groups, sharing network resources, and the like. Arora discloses "...functions for joining and leaving the network, inserting content in the distributed index, and querying the distributed index...provid[ing] mechanisms for indexing and retrieving complex content..." (Arora para. 0080). Arora does not disclose or suggest a method for responding to a received electronic message by "accessing fact attributes within [an] incoming electronic message and comparing the fact attributes with meta information stored in the computer system to determine a first pre-selected class of a plurality of classes of stored fact information" for purposes of determining appropriate processing rules and applying those rules to the electronic message. As such, Applicant's independent claims 1, 11, and 15 (as amended) are patentable over the references of record.

There is also subject matter in the dependent claims that is neither disclosed nor suggested by the references of record. For example:

Claim 3 recites a computer system that comprises "a workflow for processing the incoming electronic message, wherein the electronic file has a lifetime bound to the workflow." The Examiner cited to Arora for this subject matter, but Applicant respectfully disagrees. Arora teaches "propagating a query to a next set of peers...determining the set of peers that should receive a message being propagated...the service (query handler) handling the message may determine if further propagation is to be performed...the local query is re-propagated (within the limits of the loop and TTL rules enforced by the rendezvous service)." (Arora para. 0596). As such, Arora does not disclose or suggest a "lifetime" of the electronic file that is bound to a particular workflow. Dependent claims 13 and 17 recite similar language and are also not shown or suggested by Arora.

Claim 5 recites that "meta information includes the rule and a fact attribute identified by the rule, the fact attribute identifying the first pre-selected class of stored fact information, and wherein accessing the meta information comprises accessing the rule and the fact attribute." The

Examiner cited to Arora's "rule by which security is enforced" (Arora para. 0719). Applicant respectfully disagrees. The rules in Arora refer to a set of publishing rules used in a "social contract" by which security in a peer group is enforced. The cited rules in Arora are not associated with pre-selected classes of stored fact information, nor are they stored and/or maintained as meta information along with electronic documents sent between users or between the system and a user. Dependent claim 19 recites similar language and is also not shown or suggested by Arora.

Claim 6 recites "performing an initial screening of the incoming electronic message before accessing the meta information, wherein a result of the initial screening is used to select the rule from a plurality of rules." The Examiner cited to Arora's membership screening (Arora para. 0481). Applicant respectfully disagrees. The cited feature of Arora involves probing peer groups looking for peers that belong to specified peer groups for purposes of discovering advertisements. Accordingly, Arora does not perform the initial screening of documents, nor does it perform an initial screening for purposes of selecting rules for handling particular electronic documents. Claim 14 recites similar language and is also not shown or suggested by Arora.

Accordingly, Applicant requests that the Examiner remove the anticipation rejections of independent claims 1, 11, and 15 as well as the anticipation rejections of dependent claims 2, 3, 5-9, 12-14, 16, 17, and 19-22, which each depend either directly or indirectly from claims 1, 11, or 15.

Regarding claims 4, 10, and 18, the Examiner rejected the claims as being unpatentable over Arora in view of Chandra. Chandra discloses a method for associated related electronic messages in computer storage. (Chandra Abstract 1-2).

Claims 4 and 18 recite "the electronic file is an XML document and the retrieved portion is stored in the XML document using an XSL transaction." Neither Arora, nor Chandra disclose or suggest retrieving a portion of stored fact information, and storing the retrieved fact information in a particular XML file using an XSL transaction. In fact, a closer read of Chandra shows that incoming event messages are passed to a JAVA object and to an XML converter,

yielding an XML representation of the information, rather than starting out as an XML document in which a user can add content using an XSL transaction. Further, neither Arora, nor Chandra discloses a step of combining previously retrieved fact information with an existing XML electronic document.

Claim 10 recites "the retrieved portion of the stored fact information pertains to at least one category selected from the group consisting of: a business context of the incoming electronic message, analytical data relating to the incoming electronic message, availability of a person for attending to the incoming electronic message, a skill of a person for attending to the incoming electronic message, communication information relating to the incoming electronic message, an industry with which the incoming electronic message is associated, and combinations thereof." The Examiner cited to Chandra's "invitation to meet" and "schedule for availability" as covering all of the features in dependent claim 10. However, the Examiner did not contend that either of Chandra or Arora disclosed any portion of the subject matter recited in the independent claims or the specific subject matter recited in claim 10. As such, without conceding that the rejections have merit, Applicant submits that Chandra and Arora fail to disclose or suggest a method that determines a response to a received electronic message by analyzing meta information stored within the electronic message and using that meta information for purposes of determining appropriate processing rules and applying those rules to the message, nor do the references disclose or suggest any of the features recited in claim 10. Therefore, the cited references, alone or in combination, do not render obvious any of Applicant's pending claims.

Conclusion

All pending claims 1-22 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration of claims 1-22 as amended is requested.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or

other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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